

"Piece By Piece -- Capernaum!"

Text: Mark 9:40, "For he that is not against us is for us."

Scripture: Mark 9:33-41

Capernaum is the next stop on the route of Jesus as He makes His way to Jerusalem. This piece of the Lenten puzzle is one that is not irregular in shape, and it fits closely and evenly into the Gospel narratives. It was Capernaum that Jesus adopted as His hometown after His baptism by John. We recall from a visit to Nazareth that Jesus was not accepted in His hometown, so He moves with His family to Capernaum. He probably stayed at the home of Peter who lived in Capernaum, although he was from Bethsaida. It was at Capernaum on the shore of the Sea of Galilee that Jesus selected His first disciples from among the fishermen there. Telling them that He would make them ~~fishermen~~ fishers of men. Jesus preached mainly at the North end of the Sea of Galilee ~~during His ministry, and~~ near Capernaum during His ministry and quite a bit at nearby Bethsaida. Thus we can see from all of this that Jesus was at home in Capernaum, and it was more like a homecoming at this point in His life.

We can well imagine the feelings He must have had if we can look at His homecoming through our eyes in our experiences. If you have ever lived in a different place and you return there after a certain absence, it becomes a warm thrilling feeling to return for a visit. I know it works this way for the Link family when we are able to go back and visit the many places in which we have lived. There is an unexplained feeling of exhilaration when the destination is neared. So it is well within the realm of possibility that Jesus was looking forward to this visit, which He probably knew would be His last.

~~Capernaum~~ The name Capernaum means "Village of Nahum." It is not known whether the town was named for the prophet Nahum whose book is a part of the Old Testament, but in any event it was named for a man named Nahum. And we also know that even though Capernaum was the adopted hometown of Jesus, it received His condemnation along with those other cities which had seen His mighty works and yet had not repented.

Our Scripture for this evening is rather interesting when compared with some of the other Scriptures for this Lenten season. ~~It~~ It is interesting ^{to} ~~in~~ the extent that it contains three very ~~interest~~ unique and varied incidents, any one of which is a sermon in itself. ~~This~~ This block of Scripture contains the story of the disciples arguing among themselves who was number one man. Then we read of the importance Jesus placed ~~in~~ upon children as a part of God's Kingdom. But the story we are to be concerned with this evening has to do with others who were apparently ministering in Jesus name.

(Vs 38), John comes to Jesus and he explains that they had run across a man who was casting out demons in Jesus name. John then tells Jesus that they stopped the man from doing this, because he was not ^{an actual chosen} a disciple of Jesus.

We have heard much about exorcism in the past few months with the making and showing of the film, "The Exorcist." In the days of Jesus exorcism was something that was very prevalent. If someone was declared to be possessed of a demon that person was exorcised in a certain manner. The name of a more powerful spirit was sought, and the evil demon was commanded in the name of the more powerful spirit to come out of that person. Supposedly the evil demon was powerless to resist, and could not stand against the might of the more powerful name and so the person would be cured.

Now what had taken place was that a man was casting out a demons in the all powerful name of Jesus. But since he was not of the original band of disciples John and the others had told him to cease and desist.

It is then at this point that Jesus ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ throws a real bombshell at them. Here, are these faithful men who had followed Jesus all over the countryside. They had seen Him heal people, they had seen Him feed people with little or nothing, and in general they had been eye-witnesses of His complete ministry. It is only natural that when they asked a man to stop ³⁹ ~~42~~ tating Jesus, they believed that He would be grateful. They probably expected Him to thank them and instruct them ~~in~~ in how to further keep others from doing likewise. But instead, He tells them, (vs ~~42~~ ³⁹), "Forbid him not;

for there is no man who shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak even of me." He is telling them that there is ~~none~~ no one who can minister in His name and be against Him. He is letting them know that it is impossible to do ~~this~~ a work for God, and do evil at the same time. Work done in the name of Christ and done evilly or wrongly will come to nought. But work done in and for the name of Christ and done sincerely and properly is going to be blessed by God.

He tells them very plainly and simply, (vs 40), "He that is not against us is for us." There is no inbetween. We cannot be fence straddlers for Jesus Christ. We either accept Him and work for Him, and have Him work in our lives. Or we reject Him and all He stands for. We cannot be for Him one day and against Him the next. We cannot be His follower today, and His enemy tomorrow. It is an either or situation.

This news must have struck the disciples in a ~~way that was never expected~~ completely unexpected way. But ~~this is the thing that~~ the thing that crops up each and every-time that we read a portion of scripture involving the disciples of Jesus, is that these men who seem like so much ancient history to us most of the time, are so very much like us. Perhaps we can individually see ourselves mirrored in one of their lives. But more likely we can see ourselves mirrored collectively in them. Putting things into the context of today and making ~~it~~ an incident happen like this in our own day and our own time we would be speaking of ~~others~~ other churches or groups. We would be saying, "I cannot understand how such and such a church does the things it does," or we think that we preach or teach the Word much better than another group and so we have the inside track. Of course the reverse is also true, and that is other churches probably have and are, looking at us, and condemning us for not being as Christian as ~~they~~ them. But you see this is always the danger and especially in the realm of religion.

(Illustration magic ring in Eastern fable)

The matter was to be proven by life. By living. This is the true criteria for us or for any other church. It isn't that we do certain things exactly

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA

WEDNESDAY EVENING LENTEN SERVICE MARCH 5, 1975

REV. RALPH C. LINK, PASTOR

MRS. EUGENE STEPHENSON, ORGANIST

MR. RALPH COOPER, CHOIR DIRECTOR

SHARI McBRIDE, GREG BOSKO - ACOLYTES

ORDER OF WORSHIP - 7:30 P.M.

PRELUDE MUSIC: "PEACE OF EVENING" FOERSTER
"CHORALE" KJERULF

SILENT MEDITATION

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 477 "WORK, FOR THE NIGHT IS
COMING"

*INVOCATION - CHORAL AMEN

SCRIPTURE LESSON: MARK 9: 33-41

*GLORIA PATRI

*EVENING PRAYERS AND CHORAL RESPONSE

OFFERING

OFFERTORY "TELL ME THE OLD, OLD STORY" THOMPSON

HYMN No. 480 "I HEARD THE VOICE OF JESUS SAY"

SERMON: "PIECE BY PIECE -- CAPERNAUM!"

SERMON PRAYER

*HYMN No. 57 "SOFTLY NOW THE LIGHT OF DAY"

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE "RECESSIONAL" SCHULER

----- *CONGREGATION STANDING -----

----- *CHUCK PENAR, ROBERT KNAUER,

JOHN REDMAN AND DAN BOSKO.

FRI. - WORLD DAY OF PRAYER - FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

AT 1:30 P.M.

SAT. - 1:00 P.M. ST. PAUL'S VS. MERIDIAN IN BASKETBALL.

HOSPITALIZED: MRS. JANE ANDREWS -419 AND MRS. TRESA
NICHOLAS.

IF YOU KNOW OF ANYONE LOOKING FOR A CHURCH HOME -

NEW MEMBERS WILL BE RECEIVED ON PALM SUNDAY. PLEASE PLACE

A SLIP OF PAPER IN THE OFFERING PLATE OR GIVE TO REV.

LINK AS YOU LEAVE.

prob expect him thank them & instruct keep others 2/
 from doing likewise.
 Intend to tell them (Vg 39) "Forbid him not etc ---
 Tell not can minis his name B against him
 He let them kno it is oss 2 work 4 G to do evil same
 Work done name Xp & done evil or wrongly 4 nought
 But work dun in 4 name Xp & properly B bless G
 (40 TELL THEM)
 There no inbetween/cannot B fence straddlers 4 JU
 Either accept 2 work 4 him 2 have him work in us,
 Or reject him 2 all he stand 4
 Cannot B 4 1 day & against next
 " follower 2day & enemy tomorrow
 It EITHER/OR situation
 News must struck discip complete unexpect way
 But this scrip as all other seem like men of ancient
 history 2 us most of time.
 Yet they like us & we like them
 Can C selves mirrored individ or collectiv
 But this scrip our context 2 our day we say,
 "I cannot understand how such 2 such church does
 what it does,"
 Or we think we preach word better than nother
 group 2 have nt track on relig
 Reverse may B true other churches look at us
 condemn us 4 no B as Xpian as them
 But U C this is always danger 2 espec in relig
 (Illust. magic ring)
 Matter 2 B proven by life/by living
 This true criteria 4 us or any other church
 It not we do oort things exact same way,
 Import thing that minis in name Js Xp B follow
 of him
 A liv 2 exist 2 serve as diff denoms, but only if
 we willing serv/exist complete name 2 for sake Js Xp
~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~
 Here Js close scrip sum words reward
 He say, (41 Vg 41)
 Thus we 2 our service & acceptance of him no vain
 must note we no ask do eath shatter things or specta
 cular things
 We merely ask extend hand of luv in simp ord comm
 things of life
 Nothing mor comm than hand water 2-1 who thirsty
 (Illust. Missionary 2 African primary children)
 These thing truly bless by G/all other service imp-
 ortant also 2 necess, 2 not 2 B played down
 But outward giv of selves in little things that
 speak of Xpianity 2 others.
 must never 4get it howe liv outside of ch alway on
 display 2 peop jud e by this/this show accept reject

"I see a piece -- Japernaum!"
 Text: Mark 8:40, "For he that is not against us is
 for us."
 Scripture: Mark 8:33-41
 Cap next stop 4 Js as mates way 2 Jeru.
 A piece Lent puzz not ~~xxxx~~ irreg in shape
 fits closely 2 neatly in Gosp narra
 It Cap Js adopt hometown aft Bap by Jn
 Recall He no accept in Naz so move Cap with fam
 Hrob stay house lets who liv Cap/alho from Beth
 At Cap Js select fishermen 4 discip/make fisher men
 Js proch mainly N end S of Gal near Cap dur minis
 Also quite bit at Bethsaida nearby
 Js at home in Cap 2 like homecom 4 him
 Can well imag feels if can look thru our eyes
 U ever liv diff place U know how anticip go
 back 4 visit
 Work this way 4 us go back adopted homes other
 parts country/feel exhil when destin nears
 So Js perhaps look 4ward this visit/his last
 Cap mean 2x "Villare of Nahum" No know whether
 ptphct Nahum or not
 But even tho Js adopt Cap/ He condemn with other cit
 Scrip 2H rath interest wen compar other scrip this
 Lent season
 Contain 3 sep incids cud B use individ sermons
 1. Discip argue who num 1
 2. import Js place upon childn in G's kingdom
 3. others minis Js name/ this 1 we use
 vs 38, Jn cum Js tell man cast out demon Js name
 tell they stop man Bcause he no discip
 Bel much bout exorcism past few mths by film "Exor."
 Js days, exorcism very prevalent
 sum1 possess of dem that pers exorcised cert manner
 name mor powerful spirit sot 2 evil dem commanded
 in name that spirit cum out
 Su posed evil dem powerless resist 2 no stand
 against mor powerful name 2 so cum out/pers cured
 so wat take place, man cast dems powerful name Js
 But since not orig band discip Jn others tell
 cease 2 resist
 At this pt Js throw bombshell at them,
 here these faithful men follow Js all over country
 They saw him heal/feed peop/cast dems/ minister
 in 2 neral to many peop
 Only natural they want not imitate him
 They think Js B grateful 4 this

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)



SEP 56







Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.